Between the embodied eye and living world

Between the Embodied Eye and Living World:
The Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise

In July 1991, the monumental "cross of the scriptures" floated over the ruins of Clonmacnoise, a medieval monastery located along the banks of the River Shannon in Ireland.[1] Weighing over four metric tons and wrapped in a protective cover, the tenth-century stone cross was lowered by crane into a purpose-built visitor center, joining Clonmacnoise's two other monumental crosses, the "south cross" and "north cross," that had been installed there a few months earlier. At the same time, the Office of Public Works excavated around and beneath the sites of the crosses and inserted concrete replicas in place of the originals. Despite having endured a millennium of wind, ice, and rain, many of the sculpted figures that cover every surface of the thirteen-foot cross are in remarkably good condition.[2] Carved in varied relief, the figures twist to confront one another and, in some cases, any viewer looking at them. The imagery is innovative, lively and several scenes are unique in Christian art. Near the bottom of the cross-shaft, a fallen figure waves his legs in the air, indecorously revealing his underpants with their delicate pearl ornamentation (Fig. 9). On a panel located just beneath the large crucifixion that dominates the western face of the cross-head, Christ's stripped and exhausted body falls forward into the viewer's space (Fig. 17). On the south side of the cross, an angel shelters a tonsured monk with its wings while David plays his harp (Figs. 14-15). Directly opposite on the shadowy north side of the cross, a musician plays a triple pipe to a large cat while it serenely licks and displays its anus to the world at large (Fig. 9).

The Irish high crosses sit awkwardly within traditional, art historical narratives, which may explain the limited attention they have received outside of Ireland.[3] The survival of over two hundred such crosses challenges the established view that the Latin West produced little monumental stone sculpture during the five centuries between the Late Antique and

Romanesque periods. The number and quality of crosses produced in the ninth and tenth centuries—particularly the figurative "scripture crosses"—similarly counter the popular perception that Insular art culminated with the production of the Book of Kells around the year 800 and then swiftly declined during the Viking invasions of the decades that followed. [4] While acknowledging the virtuosity of their figural carving, broader surveys present the later crosses as "teaching crosses" with a universal appeal as opposed to the monastic erudition of earlier works such as the Ruthwell cross.[5]

Antiquarians, nationalists and more recently far-right groups have viewed the Irish crosses as romantic symbols, picturesque ruins of a foggy "Celtic" past that is simultaneously ancient, timeless and Other.[6] Art historians, past and present, have also romanticized the crosses. Although known for his advocacy of art history as a scientific discipline, Arthur Kingsley Porter argued that the high crosses did not reflect their own cultural period but rather drew inspiration from the "mists" of the prehistoric Celtic past and an exoticized "East," specifically ancient and Coptic Egypt.[7] More recently, Marilyn Stokstad described them as "belonging to the Barbarian tradition . . . a Christian adaptation of the monolithic sky pillars and sword temples erected by the pagan people," an assessment that disregards the seven centuries or more that separate the scripture crosses from these earlier, pre-Christian monuments.[8]

Since the 1930s, art historians outside of the U.S. have stood firmly within the *kunstwissenschaft* tradition, possibly as a reaction to the nationalist associations of previous studies on the high crosses. Focusing on what can be evidenced and quantified, these publications classify and categorize forms, stylistic features, influences, and the iconography of individual panels. [9] In the 1990s, Peter Harbison produced a seminal, three-volume photographic and iconographic survey to "act as a suitable companion to … the British Academy's 'corpus' of Anglo-Saxon sculpture." [10] Following the corpus model where

understandably legibility, reliability, and consistency are prized, his photographs present the crosses as scientific specimens: black-and-white, front and profile views that use raking light and supplemental close-ups taken from ladders to avoid skewed perspective. Unreliable and varying aspects—color, built environment, spectators, and oblique angles—are firmly rejected.[11]

In summary, with a few notable exceptions, [12] art historical studies have isolated the later crosses and their imagery in a variety of ways. Characterizing them as "teaching crosses" with broad appeal distances them from the monastic intellectual output epitomized by artworks such as the Ruthwell cross, Lindisfarne Gospels, and Book of Kells. Casting them as romantic symbols of Ireland's "otherness" removes them from the liturgical and artistic conventions of the Latin West as well as from contemporary socio-political events. Treating them as scientific specimens separates both the crosses and the individual scenes carved on them from any broader iconographic programs, audiences, and environments. Works such as Harbison's survey and the British Academy *Corpus* remain an indispensable resource for the study and recording of these fragile monuments, but other methodologies might provide additional, new perspectives.

Drawing in part from phenomenological methodologies, this article resituates the art object within a living world, where "the thing is inseparable from a person perceiving it, and can never be actually *in itself* because its articulations are those of our very existence, and because it stands at the other end of our gaze or at the terminus of a sensory exploration that invests it with humanity."[13] Rather than a disembodied, objective gaze, this approach considers how viewer's body—both in terms of stance, height and proximity but also in light of emotional and physical states—affects and is affected by the art work. Similar approaches have proven efficacious in Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Minimalist art historical studies but are particularly well suited to the Irish crosses due to their unique structure and

position in dynamic landscapes.[14] To a certain extent, the current project also shares concerns with ecological approaches due to its emphasis on weather, light, and landscape as integral aspects of the art object, responding to ecological exhortations that "art history needs to widen the objects of its obsessions, beyond visual culture and media, outwards towards the human and other-than-human vectors that animate the planet and its ecosystems."[15] By considering changing perspectives, audiences, times of day, seasons, weather, viewing pathways, and proximity to the beholder elicit a series of encounters with a polymorphic, performative object.

Additionally, the crosses are markedly early and distinct instances of the tendencies recently identified in later Romanesque and Gothic sculpture. As there currently is no single, published study of the cross of the scriptures and the interpretation of many of its panels remains contested, the iconography of individual panels will sometimes be discussed in detail before considering how their meaning is affected by and affects the rest of the cross, its surroundings, and the gaze of the beholder.[16] This article does not offer a comprehensive art historical analysis of the cross of the scriptures but instead provides a phenomenological investigation that shows the iconographic program to be an erudite and nuanced expression of ecclesiastical authority and the role of bodily mortification as a route to salvation.

Clonmacnoise and its Sculptures in the Tenth Century

Founded by St Ciarán in the sixth century, the monastery of Clonmacnoise is situated in the center of the island of Ireland.[17] Throughout most of the medieval period, the monastery was a populous, thriving hub at the intersection of Ireland's largest river running north-south and the Eiscir Riada, an ancient roadway and primary land route from east to west. Unsurprisingly, given its location, Clonmacnoise played a significant role in Ireland's socio-political landscape during much of the medieval period. When St. Columba visited from Iona in the sixth century, the monastery already possessed at least two churches. In the eighth and ninth centuries, it

occupied a critical position on the border between the kings of Connacht and those of the Southern Uí Neill. By the tenth century, it had long established connections with the kings of Ireland, serving as the burial site for several high-kings, their wives and children. The monastery had an active and respected scriptorium that may have produced the Irish annals.[18]

The cross of the scriptures and the stone church that stands directly behind it were erected in the early tenth century, possibly as part of a single building phase (Figs. 1 and 20). The base of the cross-shaft contains an inscription reading, "A prayer for Flann, son of Maelsechlann . . . and for Colman who made this cross on [?] King Flann."[19] The two individuals have long been identified as Colman Conaillech, abbot of the monasteries of Clonmacnoise and Clonard from 904-926, and Flann Sinna, king of Mide from 877 and high king of Ireland from 879 to 914. According to the Irish annals, these two men were also responsible for the erection of the church in 909.[20] Their collaboration was a significant undertaking as the church is the largest pre-Romanesque stone church to survive in Ireland.[21]

The excavations of the 1990s corroborated earlier hypotheses about the position and appearance of the site in the tenth century.[22] The cross of the scriptures does not seem to have been moved at any point until the 1990s, and the current western wall and western doorway of the church are in the same place as those of the original building (Figs. 1 and 20). The only significant change is the current asymmetry as the original wall extended slightly further to the south. Marked graves, primarily of males dating from the early medieval period, were scattered in the area between the western wall and the cross of the scriptures. The eighth-century south cross seems to have been moved to its 1990s position in the tenth-century, likely when the cross of the scriptures and stone church were erected. Artifacts found under the ninth-century north cross indicate its relocation during the post-medieval period.[23] Although its tenth-century position is unknown, the symmetry of the rest of the site suggests that it may have originally stood not far from its twentieth-century location. Therefore, it seems likely that in the tenth

century, the three crosses formed a triangle directly before the church with the cross of the scriptures at its apex.

Although over 200 high crosses survive in Ireland, only twenty to thirty have elaborate figurative, iconographic programs. Of these, the cross of the scriptures has long been associated with a group of crosses dotted across the Irish midlands, noted for their naturalism, varied relief, and the animated and fleshy quality of the figures. Roger Stalley has argued that seven of these crosses are the work of a single artist, the so-called "Muiredach Master". This group includes the cross of the scriptures, the north cross at Duleek, the cross now in Durrow Abbey, the "market cross" and "tower cross" at Kells, and "Muiredach's cross" and the "tall cross" at Monasterboice.[24]

East looking West: A Question of Perspective

On bright mornings, the rising sun first illuminates the bottom panel situated directly above the inscription on the east side of the cross (Fig. 4). The image shows two figures holding a stave or stake upright in the ground. The man on the left is tonsured and dressed in clerical garb while the one on the right wears secular dress and a sword (Figs. 2-4). Scholarship is divided as to the identity of the two figures.[25] The inscription and the cross's position before the stone church indicate that the two men might be Abbot Colman and King Flann, collaborating to erect the stone cross and church in the tenth century. An alternative interpretation argues that the image depicts the establishment of the monastery in 554 by St. Ciarán and King Flann's ancestor, Diarmait, who would become high-king of Ireland. The Irish Life of St. Ciarán, likely written at Clonmacnoise in the tenth century, describes how Ciarán and Diarmait raised the foundation stake of the wooden church together while the saint proclaimed, "Warrior suffer my hand to be over thy hand, and thou shalt be over the men of Ireland in high kingship."[26]

Publications of the past forty years have demonstrated how religious images from Insular manuscripts as well as Pictish and Anglo-Saxon monuments combine multiple events, persons, and literary references in a single image or figure. Representations of the evangelists were often Christ-bearing figures with monastic tonsure posed among contemporary scribal instruments and settings. These "portraits" conflate Christ, his evangelists and contemporary monks spreading the Word of God.[27] Resituating the panel within this multivalent Insular tradition, it likely refers to Colman and King Flann as well as their sixth-century predecessors, Ciarán and Diarmait, unified in building Clonmacnoise. The interplay of the panel, inscription, and *vita* suggest that the collaboration between Colman and Flann was purposely framed as an imitation of the cooperation of their celebrated precursors, Ciarán and Diarmait. The stave shown in the panel has a bulbous top, which might also have prompted an association with the cross of the scriptures, standing in its stone socket lodged within the earth.

Additionally, the built and natural environment framing the cross suggests that the efforts of the abbots and kings were not isolated or fixed in the past but an integral and ongoing part of the monastery's present and future existence. The rays of the rising sun move upward from the ground to the inscription on the base, then up the shaft, and finally to the top of the cross, reinforcing the sense of cyclical beginnings and renewal.[28] The sunrise also generates another, albeit immaterial, cross in the form of a shadow that grows westwards from the base (Fig. 4). The cross of the scriptures aligns with the only doorway of the original tenth-century church (Figs. 1 and 20). Emerging from early prayers, members of the church might even glimpse their own shadows projected onto the bottom panel of the cross, becoming an integral part of the building and rebuilding of the figurative and physical church of Clonmacnoise.

The panel's position also shows a subtle negotiation between secular and religious authority and audiences. For the spectator looking to the west, the king is on the right, typically the superior position, and the abbot on the left. The depiction of Christ in Judgement, which

fills the cross-head and arms, shows the damned on Christ's left and the saved on his right (Figs. 2 and 12). Consequently, the king stands directly beneath the pitchfork-wielding demon while the abbot stands under the saved. An Old Irish discussion of *fractio* indicates a similarly nuanced awareness of differing viewpoints, stating that a piece of the host should be taken from the priest's left to signify the wounding of Christ's right side because for "westwards was Christ's face on the Cross . . . and eastwards the face of Longinus; what to him was the left to Christ was the right."[29]

When measured by the compass and the sun, the king's position also suggests moral inferiority. He stands north of the abbot, a direction Christian and Insular writers associated with evil, temptation, and darkness. These connotations likely evolved from natural phenomena such as northern winds and shadows as well as from biblical passages describing God's enemies as coming from the north.[30] Several crosses, including the cross of the scriptures, place scenes of sin, penance, and damnation on the north side of the cross.[31] With its emphasis upon front and profile views, twentieth-century, "corpus-style" photography elides the juxtapositions of panels that occurs at the corners of these monuments: southeast, northeast, and so on. Insular texts, however, describe audiences moving around the crosses.[32] The iconographic combinations that occur at the seams between the four faces were an integral part of the viewer's experience. When seen from the northeast, the king's side of the panel abuts one on the north side that shows a book-wielding monk admonishing a sinner (Fig. 3). In contrast, when viewed from the southwest, the abbot's side is juxtaposed with the *nomen sacrum* (Fig. 11).[33]

The king's position—beneath the damned, on Christ's left, next to a sinner, and north of the abbot—requires some explanation due to his involvement with the creation of the cross and church. It is worth considering Flann's actions a few years before. The Irish annals report that in 903/4, Flann was responsible for profaning the monastery at Kells, which involved

killing his son and beheading people in the oratory.[34] As discussed below, much of the cross's iconography on the north and west sides focuses on sin, penance, and forgiveness through the sacraments. Additionally, the panel allows for different readings and audiences. From the mortal and transient viewpoint of the audience, the king might be seen to be on the right but from the eternal, heavenly perspective of Christ in Judgement, he is on the left and the abbot on the right. Additionally, whereas the sun-illuminated south side faces the monastery's interior, the north side looks to the River Shannon, which in the tenth century was the main artery to the secular world and all its power (Fig. 5). The artist/designer created a nuanced image that occupied an intersection between secular and ecclesiastical realms. Both parties could view the cross without offense as king and abbot occupied the superior position—at least from their own, unique vantage points.

The two remaining panels on the eastern side of the cross-shaft also focus upon ecclesiastical and secular authority. The *Traditio Clavium et Legis*, positioned directly beneath the ringed cross-head, is badly-worn but it is possible to distinguish the key and small book that Christ holds out to Peter and Paul (Figs. 2 and 12). The panel's juxtaposition with the image of Christ in Judgement furthers the central message that Peter and Paul's authority is an extension of that of Christ. The identity of the two figures depicted in the panel beneath the *Traditio Clavium* is more ambiguous (Fig. 2). Both men wear ornate robes, elaborate brooches, swords, and long beards. Although rigidly frontal, they grasp a horn between them. While Harbison has identified the two men as the pharaoh and his chief cup-bearer from Genesis 41, more recent publications have observed that the figures' relative parity, secular clothing, and attributes indicate men of high status, likely kings or sub-kings.[35] Suggested identifications include Flann and his father, Máel Sechnaill high-king of Ireland, or Flann and his ancestor, Diarmait.[36] Margaret Williams has persuasively argued that the two men are Flann and Cathal Mac Conchobair, king of Connacht. The Irish annals describe a meeting and truce between

Flann and Cathal that took place near Clonmacnoise in 900, when "Cathal came into the house of Flann under the protection of the clergy of Ciarán so that he was afterward obedient to the king."[37] The horn might well signify this pact as the King of Leinster distributed horns as a stipend to sub-kings. [38] Read together, the imagery of the east side portrays the harmonious sharing of power that is dynamic but at the same time hierarchical and ordered.

The Dark North: Fleshy Pleasures and Corporal Correction

As discussed above, the north carried negative connotations. This association is reflected in the iconographic programs of several crosses connected to the "Muiredach Master." What is believed to have originally been the north side of the market cross at Kells depicts entangled, amputated human limbs and a large demonic figure complete with tail and horns.[39] As far as can be ascertained, most Last Judgment images from the Muiredach group seem to have been east-facing, so that the damned are shown on the northern arm. In several instances, including the cross of the scriptures, the devil or one of his demons push the damned further northwards (Fig. 2). The north was the darkest side of the cross, remaining in shadow throughout most of the day. At Clonmacnoise, the core of the monastery—including its churches, crosses, and graves—was situated on an elevated plateau. The arrangement may have recalled passages such as Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden." While the plateau extends out to the south, it falls away dramatically on the north side to a flood plain that meets the River Shannon.

The lowest panel on the north side of the cross of the scriptures depicts a tonsured man in a long robe, seated on a chair and clutching a book to his chest with his left hand (Figs. 6 and 9). With his right hand, the figure plunges a long staff into the face of a man at his feet. The prostrate man's legs flail in the air and his cloak parts to expose his short, ornate pantaloons. The seated figure is most commonly described as Christ or a saint subduing the devil.[40] Porter,

referencing a passage from the *Silva Gadelica* in which a high-king forces his sword into the mouth of a supine sub-king, suggested the panel showed Patrick subduing the devil.[41] When viewed from above, however, it is clear that the staff goes into the eye socket, not the mouth. The broader context of the full iconographic program suggests a more likely explanation.

The panel above depicts a long-haired man playing the triple-pipes. His feet rest upon the backs of two interlaced quadrupeds (Figs. 6 and 9). While most authors fail to mention the panel or merely describe the figure as a musician, others offer vague suggestions without elucidation or support, such as the "enchantment of the Sidhe."[42] Harbison hesitantly posited that the two quadrupeds might refer to the burial of Paul by lions and identified the human figure as Anthony playing a lament for his "dead fellow."[43] Publications pointedly ignore the cat positioned in the upper left-hand corner of the panel. It is nonetheless quite prominent, larger than the pipe-player's head and located next to his face. Laying on its back and splaying its hind legs with its front legs, the cat curls around to display and lick its anus. The musician twists toward the cat so that the proximity of his eyes to the cat's bottom creates an unpleasant spectacle. Taller onlookers would similarly "get an eyeful" due to the panel's position midway up the cross-shaft.

Insular artists did not shy away from vulgar images, often representing sin as self-cannibalism or masturbation. Both the Barberini Gospels and a cross-arm fragment from Strathmartine in Scotland show solitary, nude male figures that stroke their beards with one hand and their phalluses with the other.[44] The Book of Kells, a manuscript that the artist might have become acquainted with when carving a high cross at Kells, has several such figures. The decorated initial that begins the phrase "*Adtendite vobis*" of Luke 17:2 consists of a twisted, half-naked man who bends over and pulls at his own hair. A delicately drawn bird stretches its head around to the figure's backside, its beak hovering uncomfortably close to the man's bottom (Fig. 10). [45]

A similarly profane figure appears elsewhere at Clonmacnoise, on the fragmented north cross.[46] Although most often compared to representations of the Cernunnos, a male Celtic deity from the Gallo-Roman period, such as seen on the Gundestrup cauldron from the first or second century BC, the connection is tenuous at best, relying on two visual features, the cross-legged pose and what have been interpreted as antlers.[47] The former is common throughout Insular art. A close inspection of the sculpture, aided by recent digital scans, shows the latter to be tendrils of hair extending out from two profile heads on either side of the head of the central figure. Previous discussions of the north cross fragment overlook the fact that the naked figure is markedly female, with clearly delineated, pendulous breasts. The woman's entangled, spindly arms splay her legs in a fashion not that far removed from the cat in the cross of the scriptures.

The entangled creatures at the pipe-player's feet might also be understood through reference to the broader Insular artistic tradition. Several images portray the devil and his minions as a parody or anti-type of Christ or Christ-bearing figures such as Daniel and David. The Leofric Missal depicts Christ-*Vita* on the verso of a page, and Satan-*Mors* as an almost identical figure with added demonic features on the recto.[48] Similarly, the horned devil on the market cross of Kells is flanked by two creatures who support the larger central figure in a perverse imitation of the many Insular representations of "Christ between Two Living Creatures".[49] The Clonmacnoise image might similarly be understood as a kind of inversion of "Christ over the Beasts," another image found throughout the Insular corpus.[50] Both the Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter use images of riders and their mounts entangled and pulling in opposite directions as metaphors for sin.[51]

The panel above the musician shows a seated, long-haired figure wearing a robe with a short staff between his legs (Figs. 7 and 8). Another man stands behind him and appears to cut or comb his hair. The seated figure has been identified as Anthony due to the saint's attribute of a tau-shaped crosier in the later medieval period, or as Patrick receiving his tonsure from St.

Martin as described in Patrick's *vita*.[52] The identification of Anthony is most unlikely. There is no mention of Paul cutting Anthony's hair, and Anthony of Egypt would not be depicted wearing Celtic tonsure, which went from ear to ear.[53] Although Celtic tonsure had been rejected in favor of Roman tonsure at least two centuries before, tenth-century Irish churchmen would be familiar with its appearance and its particularly Insular associations because of the significant role it played in debates between Irish and Roman monastic traditions.

Neither interpretation explains the large disk on the seated figure's chest. Harbison describes the object as "perhaps a brooch or a clasp," but it bears little resemblance to the brooches worn by the figures on the eastern side of the cross or to any other extant Irish brooch or representations of them. Moreover, it is positioned in the center of the chest and hangs from a strap around the figure's neck. In Matthew 18:5, Christ warns, "But whoever will have led astray one of these little ones who trust in me, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck, and to be submerged in the depths of the sea." The Matthew passage, in which Christ expounds upon the dangers of temptation, concludes with advice that may also explain the imagery in the bottom panel, "And if your eye leads you to sin, root it out and cast it away from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, then to be sent into the fires of Hell having two."

Details from both panels resonate with the *vitae* of Ciarán and Patrick. In the tenth-century life of St. Ciarán, the saint commands a bird to pluck out a servant's eye but heals him after receiving obeisance from the servant and a gift of the mill and all its lands from the man's master.[54] While the cross does not directly illustrate this event, the bird on the staff, millstone, and punitive removal of the sinner's eye suggest a common milieu. The *vita* also describes how, after erecting the foundation stake of Clonmacnoise, the saint fixes it in place saying, "Lo, this … into Trén's eye," referring to a youth who had previously disobeyed the saint, and "straightway at Ciarán's word Trén's on eye brake in his head."[55] An event from the Irish life

of Patrick more closely connects to the upper panel. After debating with the saint, a druid submits to his preaching. He immediately converts to Christianity at which point Patrick cuts the pagan priest's Celtic tonsure, transforming it into the Roman style. Relative to Clonmacnoise, the incident occurs directly before the elderly Patrick goes to baptize the infant St. Ciarán.[56] Although Insular monks wore Celtic tonsure until the early eighth century, the longer hairstyle was associated with druids and Simon Magus from its earliest appearance in the literature.[57] More generally, monastic tonsure and the cutting of hair signified shaving the body of sin.[58]

The north side of the cross provides a meditation upon the temptations of worldly pleasures, the nature of sin, and the necessity of correction and penance in a physical and visceral fashion. The top panel envisions a sinner with "a great millstone hung around his neck" while the lowest one shows a man who has fallen, been appropriately admonished, and who is "entering life with one eye." Both instances suggest that suffering, humiliation, discipline, and submission to moral correction in this life is better than the bestial, ephemeral pleasures of the flesh and the eternal damnation they entail. The supine man on the bottom panel whose hands cover or hold his genitals as well as the cat on the middle panel hint at the debased nature of exhibitionism and self-pleasure. In the Lucan version of the millstone passage, Christ adds, "Be attentive to yourselves. If your brother has sinned against you, correct him. And if he has repented, forgive him." It is this verse in the Book of Kells that contains the exhibitionist initial and bird discussed above. A small, tonsured monk rides over the word "sinned" (Fig. 10). In both the Book of Kells and the cross of the scriptures, the imagery highlights the role of fraternal correction, possibly an allusion to the Irish monastic practice of having a soul-friend (*anmchara*), a private confessor and moral guide.[59] The north side may also reflect the use of the crosses as a focal point for confession and penitential prayer as evidenced in hagiographies and penitentials.[60]

The South: Aligning with the Hand of God

The north and south sides of the cross act as binary opposites. Whereas the north side is in shadow for most of the day, the south is the most consistently illuminated side of the cross. While the northern imagery focuses on those struggling with the temptations of the flesh (Figs. 6-9), the southern side shows the righteous basking in God's grace and protection (Figs. 11, 14-15). On the upper-most panel on the shaft, directly under the cross-ring, an angel with outspread wings shelters a tonsured figure holding a crosier. In the panel beneath, David plays his harp. In both cases, the panels' content and composition serves as an anti-type to its counterpart in the parallel position on the opposite side of the cross. David as harpist is paired with the pipe player. Whereas the pipe player is frontal and looks away from the monastery, David's legs and harp are in profile so that he faces the church and inner bounds of the monastery. While the beasts at the feet of the pipe player are discordant, pulling in opposite directions, the beast beneath David is entirely submissive, resigned to its role as footstool and throne. The panel at the top of the southern side shows an angel standing protectively over a figure with Roman tonsure, and its northern opposite depicts a cleric standing over and correcting the druid with his Celtic tonsure.

The lowest panels on the shaft also contrast between sin and salvation. Whereas the north side shows a monk "correcting" a sinner, the south consists of two sets of interlaced figures forming an "X." The monks of Clonmacnoise, schooled in the Insular tradition, may well have perceived the shape as the "*Chi*" of the *nomen sacrum*. Insular artists and scribes were disproportionately preoccupied with the *Chi* as a sign of the redemption brought about by Christ's incarnation and sacrifice. They often expanded and decorated the *Chi* but also seemed to delight in finding innovative ways of incorporating it into other images and designs. Numerous examples show beasts and human figures creating an "X" with their bodies.[61]

The pairing of good and evil continues on the underside of the ring and cross arms. The northern under-arm depicts a large cat that is either devouring or vomiting up the lower half of a human figure while the southern under-arm shows the Hand of God. (Fig. 12).[62] A popular image in the ninth century, the Hand of God appeared in a number of contexts, primarily in the imperial portraits of Charles the Bald and his successors, Psalter illustration, Lombard funerary sculpture, and apse mosaics in Rome.[63] It has been suggested that the Hand of God at Clonmacnoise might refer to Flann's elevation to high king in 879, imitating the Sacramentary of Charles the Bald which shows the Hand of God grasping a crown and descending over the king.[64] Three other manuscripts associated with Charles the Bald similarly depict the Hand of God open and empty as it emerges from the heavens.[65] Rather perplexingly, the Hand of God at Clonmacnoise—if intended to be read as facing downwards towards the earth—would have to be understood as God's left hand, contravening the frequent biblical references and commentaries that explicitly refer to the benediction of God's right hand.[66]

It is certainly possible that a member of either the Irish royal court or the Clonmacnoise community might have been familiar with continental practice. Six such imperial portraits survive including one given to the pope in Rome.[67] A coin minted c.910-915 for Edward the Elder suggests Anglo-Saxon kings were also emulating this type of imagery.[68] A letter to Charles the Bald describes his court as overflowing with "a multitude" of Irish monks.[69] Joseph, a pupil of Colcu of Clonmacnoise, was present at the Carolingian court, and the correspondence between Colcu, Joseph, and Alcuin evidence further, earlier connections between Clonmacnoise and the Carolingian court. Most relevant to the cross of the scriptures, the annals record that Flann's father sent "legates with gifts" to Charles the Bald in the interests of "peace and amity" but also to request passage to Rome.[70]

Inscriptions from the Carolingian examples suggest that they refer to God's protection and ultimate authority. The Hand of God in the Codex Aureus of Charles the Bald (Fig. 13),

for example, is surrounded by the inscription, "The right hand of the Father, governing the universe by his control,/And may it shield always Charles from his enemy."[71] Similarly, the dedicatory poem facing the imperial portrait in the First Bible of Charles the Bald promises that the monks will sing psalms and say masses for the king, his wife, and child.[72] Both manuscripts signal that while the king governs bodies and lands, monks guard hearts and souls—including those of the king and his family. Hibernicus exul, an Irish monk living on the continent in the ninth century, addressed a poem to the Hand of God, which may have been influential on the late Carolingian imperial portraits.[73] The size, scale, and position of the Hand at Clonmacnoise clearly express that God's hand is ultimately above that of Diarmait/Flann.

The panel depicting the king and abbot is located directly above the base of the cross (Fig. 2). Its counterpart on the east side contains an image of Christ in the Tomb that has relatively explicit references to the resurrection of Christ and the whole race of Adam (Figs. 16 and 18).[74] The proximity of both panels to the ground would have been a poignant reminder of the limits of secular power. King Flann's father, and eventually Flann and his children, were buried at Clonmacnoise. The semi-circle of elevated ground around the cross and western wall of the church was covered with marked graves (Figs. 1, 4 and 20). It is certainly possible that some members of Flann's family were interred in this area.[75] This grave-littered landscape frames the cross. While Carolingian monks promised to sing psalms and pray for the souls of Charles the Bald and his family, at Clonmacnoise this promise is made manifest by the burial grounds the cross stands in. The image of David playing the harp in the middle panel, directly at eye-level and under the Hand of God on the sun-filled south side of the shaft, similarly conveys the solace of psalms over the dead (Fig. 11). Notably, in the Latin Life of Cainnech, the saint places his face against a cross that marks the site of a king's death in battle and through tears and prayers frees the king's soul from hell.[76] Most relevant to the Clonmacnoise pairing of the raising of the foundation stake by abbot and king on the eastern side with Christ in the

Tomb on the western side, angels in Irish saints' lives frequently tell the founder that the place where s/he founds the monastery will be the location of their own resurrection and, consequently, the place of resurrection for their community and dependents.[77]

While the Hand of God might convey a particular message to the king and his court, it seems unlikely that this gesture of benediction and protection was intended solely for a singular recipient or group. Suspended over the heads of its audience, the Hand at Clonmacnoise hangs in the air like a query or command awaiting a human response and presence—whether imagined, remembered, or corporal. It is an open, ambiguous, and flexible sign. Anyone standing beneath it and sheltered under the arms of the cross may envisage themselves under God's protection or blessing. Like the use of first person in the language of the psalms, the Hand's position on the cross creates a direct and intimate relationship between the praying supplicant and God, the visual equivalent of "I" and "you" rather than "he" and "she."

The position of the Hand of God at Clonmacnoise lacks the anatomical and narrative contexts that help audiences orient themselves in relation to a work. The Hand of God on folio 97v of the Codex Aureus similarly omits visual cues, dominating the otherwise non-figurative opening of John's Gospel (Fig. 13). In manuscripts, the sequence and orientation of the script usually guide readers' eyes along set pathways from left to right and top to bottom. The circular inscription written in gold on folio 97v, however, requires that readers orbit the Hand of God, orienting and reorienting themselves, constantly shifting around the unchanging center. Similarly, the Clonmacnoise audience must move around the cross, taking in multiple perspectives in time and space.

The artist's decision to carve the Hand of God on the under-arm rather than the more prominent and elevated central faces or the four panels of the capstone merits further consideration. Because of the Hand's placement at the juncture between the cross and the ring,

it simultaneously inhabits several visual, structural, and iconographic fields (Figs. 11-12 and 15-16). Its presence and benediction connects the eschatological panoply on the eastern cross-face, the biblical and historical scenes on the cross-shaft, the audience, and the monastery's grounds. It is almost omnipresent, visible from any direction except the north. Depending on whether viewed from west or east, the Hand may be read as God/Christ's left hand with the palm lowered towards the earth and/or as his right hand raised upwards to the heavens. Such polyvalence and ambiguity collapses time and conveys the omniscient and omnipresent of God. His right hand blesses the saved in heaven while the left offers benediction to the dead buried in the grounds surrounding the cross, awaiting the moment of resurrection.

In order to see the Hand of God when standing under the cross-arm, viewers must crane their heads back, heightening the sense of disorientation. From this perspective, the skies above Clonmacnoise frame the Hand of God. (Fig. 14). On windy, bright days, which are not infrequent in Ireland, clouds race across blue skies, stippling the fields with their shadows. Consequently, alternating flashes of light and shadow animate the Hand of God, and the eye struggles to adjust, leaving the viewer with a sense of unsteadying motion. The cognitive effects are not that dissimilar from those produced by the glittering tesserae that surround the Hand of God in church mosaics or the shimmering ornament and undulating shapes that circle the Hand of God in the Codex Aureus and its Ottonian copies (Fig. 13). It has been suggested that the blue lozenge and circles that surround the Hand of God in the Codex Aureus recall Isidore's celestial diagram of the *rota planetarum*, depicting the relationship between "God's eternity and his creation."[78] At Clonmacnoise the skies, clouds, planets, stars, and moon actually circle the Hand of God and its audience. On rainy days, it is possible to shelter under the Hand of God. Rain slowly coalesces along arms' edges, occasionally falling in large drops that punctuate the downpour. The Hand of God and spectator occupy a field of contrasting stillness and quiet.[79]

Because of its location under the cross-arm, the Hand of God remains in perpetual shadow. The panel directly beneath depicts a tonsured figure sheltered by the angel's outspread wings, which also remains in shadow for much of the day. In Exodus 33:22, God explains that no one may see God's face and live but promises to shelter Moses, "When my glory will cross over, I will set you in a cleft of the rock, and I will protect you with my right hand until I pass by." Similarly, at Clonmacnoise God's hand shields the spectator from the sun. For most of the day, it also shelters the angel and figure set within the cleft between the cross arm and shaft (Figs. 11 and 14). The psalms frequently describe both God's hand and wings giving shelter, the latter frequently within the context of casting a protective shadow over the psalmist. [80] In Psalm 16:8, the psalmist asks that God "protect me under the shadow of your wings" from those who resist "your right hand," and proclaims in Psalm 62, "And I will exult in the cover of your wings . . . your right hand has supported me."

The West: The Body of Christ

The Crucifixion and entire west side of the cross of the scriptures are markedly focused on Christ's body (Fig. 16). Whereas additional biblical and hagiographic scenes typically flank the crucifixion and fill the arms of other figurative crosses attributed to the "Muiredach Master," the arms of the cross of the scriptures contain only two crouching figures holding horns, who direct our attention back to the body of Christ.[81] Christ, with his disproportionately long arms and large hands, fills the entire cross-head. Stephaton and Longinus, a ubiquitous component of Insular crucifixion images, are reduced to minuscule figures crouching beneath his arms. Christ's body appears almost naked, his physique sensitively modelled.[82]

The panel directly beneath the Crucifixion depicts three men, two of whom wear short tunics, hold spears, and are shown in profile (Figs. 16-17). A T-shaped tunic is held up against

the lower body of the central figure. The panel has been identified as showing the "soldiers casting lots for Christ's seamless garment," a scene often positioned beneath the crucifixion in Carolingian and Byzantine examples. [83] Somewhat problematically, however, this interpretation requires that all three circles surrounding the heads of the three figures be understood as the crests of helmets. Several details in the panel, however, suggest that the central figure is meant to be Christ rather than another soldier. Except for the Crucifixion, crosses associated with the "Muiredach Master" consistently depict Christ, the apostles, and clerics in longer robes whereas soldiers wear short tunics that end above the knee. Close inspection of the Clonmacnoise panel, aided by recent digital scans, shows that the man in the center wears a long undergarment visible beneath the T-shaped tunic and does not grasp the tunic as has been suggested but instead has his hands bound in front of him. [84] Additionally, the circle surrounding his head cannot be the crest of a helmet as he is not shown in profile.

An alternative possibility is that the panel depicts the Stripping of Christ. Although rarely represented until the fourteenth century, Insular iconography often diverges significantly from continental norms. The canonical gospels do not explicitly refer to the disrobing of Christ, but it is implied at multiple points in the Passion. It is described in the Gospel of Nicodemus, a text Harbison has shown to have had considerable influence on the iconography of the high crosses.[85] In the *Old Irish Passion,* dated to the early eleventh century, soldiers lead Christ out before the "hosts of Jews, and then they stripped his garment from him and left him naked." Christ is dressed and led to his execution where he is again "deprived of his garment, a purple tunic that Mary had made for him."[86] In Psalm 21, which exegetes invariably interpreted as spoken by Christ about his Passion, the humiliations listed by the psalmist are not limited to being surrounded and seized by his enemies but also include being naked and exposed to a voyeuristic gaze, "They have numbered all my bones. And they have examined me and stared at me."

The panel beneath echoes the composition above. Two figures dressed in short tunics turn toward a central figure whose lower body is covered in a long robe (Figs. 16-17). Although badly worn, the scene is usually identified as the Betrayal or Arrest of Christ. This interpretation views the left-hand figure as a soldier seizing Christ and that on the right as Judas embracing Christ.[87] Alternatively, the panel shows the Scourging of Christ. Christ stands with his hands still tied in front of him. [88] The left-hand figure beats him with a rod or club while the right-hand figure holds him in place. This interpretation is supported by a similar, but less worn, panel on the Durrow cross that shows the left-hand figure beating Christ with something, possibly branches or a short, multi-thong whip.[89] Christ wears a long undergarment on his lower half, but his upper torso appears naked. At Clonmacnoise, the figure on the right pushes Christ's left shoulder, suggesting rough handling rather than an embrace, as does the fact that both men appear to step on Christ's feet. Finally, at both Durrow and Clonmacnoise, the flanking figures wear short tunics as opposed to the long robes worn by Christ and his apostles, suggesting that the right-hand figures do not portray the apostle Judas but rather the men who seize, strip, mock, and beat Christ.

The bottom panel shows two soldiers sitting upon Christ's tomb (Figs. 16 and 18). An angel sits to the right of the soldiers. The heads of two additional figures, likely the women visiting the tomb, appear in the upper-right section of the panel. In certain lighting conditions, the angel appears to clutch a miniature man standing on the tomb to its bosom (Fig. 18). Harbison has identified the tiny figure as Adam, suggesting that the panel's position directly above the ground refers to the Harrowing of Hell.[90] The belief that Christ's cross was erected over the burial place of Adam, although contested by some patristic writers, held considerable currency in Ireland where it was linked explicitly and repeatedly to Adam's hope of resurrection.[91] The *Saltair na Rann*, written a few decades after the cross of the scriptures was erected, describes Christ's cross "planted in the body of Adam."[92] This gruesome image has

clear resonances with Clonmacnoise as marked graves surrounded all three crosses—and the south cross had two bodies buried directly beneath it.[93]

The presence of Christ's body, visible beneath its grave-slab, is highly unusual in Christian art before the eleventh century, appearing in only a few images depicting Christ's deposition and interment.[94] It is present in the Utrecht and Harley psalters where Christ's body in the tomb is juxtaposed with an image of him pulling naked souls out of the ground (Fig. 19), illustrating Psalm 15:9-10, "Moreover, even my body will rest in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hell, nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption."[95] Although rarely depicted elsewhere in Christian art, the "Muiredach Master" portrays Christ's body in the tomb on a total of four crosses. In each case, the panel appears near the ground at the bottom of the cross-shaft.[96] The inclusion of a bird stretching its beak toward Christ's open mouth is unique within Christian art, except for a similar panel on Muiredach's cross. Comparisons with a Late Anglo-Saxon ivory and patristic texts suggest the bird signifies the soul returning to the body.[97]

Despite being positioned directly before the entrance to the church, the cross of the scriptures lacks the eucharistic images that are so common on other figurative crosses: the Marriage Feast of Cana, Multiplication of the Loaves and the Fishes, the Sacrifice of Isaac, and—a particularly popular Insular allusion to the Eucharist—Paul and Anthony Sharing the Loaf.[98] Entering the church at Clonmacnoise, the viewer is instead confronted with the body of Christ—stripped, wrapped, pierced, tortured, and dead (Figs. 16-18).

The pathos of Christ's bodily suffering and the congregation's subsequent compunction and remorse are integral aspects of the Eucharistic ritual as evidenced in the Latin Mass and Old Irish Tract on the Mass preserved in the eighth-century Stowe Missal.[99] The liturgy begins, "We have sinned, O Lord, we have sinned," and it is difficult to find a single prayer that does not frame the Eucharist in terms of Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.[100] Similarly,

the tract begins by describing the altar as "a figure of the persecution that was afflicted" and goes on to explain that the fraction is a figure of the priest's "attack" ("*ammus*") and "a figure of the contumelies and of the stripes and of the capture" experienced by Christ during his Passion.[101]

The tract also indicates a close association between the ringed cross and Eucharist, concluding with the instruction, "This be in thy mind [during the taking of the Eucharist]: the portion of the Host which thou receives [to be] as it were a member of Christ from his cross."[102] It directs that the pieces of bread be arranged in the shape of a ringed cross for Easter, Pentecost, and the Nativity.[103] The only surviving Insular paten, part of the Derrynavlan hoard, consists of a thick, raised ring decorated with large enamel studs that encompasses a shallow silver plate. The visual design closely resembles that of the high cross-rings with their raised bosses.[104] If the Clonmacnoise congregation—which surely would have been among the most well-equipped in Ireland—used a similar paten and followed the contemporary practice of arranging bread in the shape of a ringed-cross, the resonance between the body of Christ in the cross-head and the host on its paten would have been emphatic.

Within the cross-head just beneath the upper-most medallion, a tiny angel reaches down with its arms or wings toward the top of Christ's head (Fig. 16). While angels frequently appear in Insular images of the crucifixion, they typically occur in pairs flanking Christ's head, such as on Muiredach's cross, the Athlone crucifixion plaque, and St. Gall Gospels.[105] The eucharistic ritual, as recorded in the Stowe Missal, asks that God grant that the host and cup be "carried by the hands of thy holy angel to thine altar on high."[106] The awkward and unusual insertion of a single angel above Christ's head, seeming to reach down toward Christ, might further the association between the Eucharist and the crucified body of Christ. The height of the cross-head and the changing backdrop of the skies glimpsed through its four apertures would certainly be appropriate to a heavenly altar.

The artist's selection and rendering of events from the Passion emphasize the unveiling and shrouding of Christ's body (Figs. 16-18). In the Eucharist and Easter liturgical rites, the body and cross of Christ are similarly wrapped and revealed. The Stowe Missal describes the use of a double veil, directing that the Eucharist be unveiled before the start of the Mass, half uncovered before the reading of the gospel, and fully uncovered at the end of the Creed.[107] Although no Irish description of the Easter ritual survives from this period, the Late Anglo-Saxon *Regularis concordia* details a similar pattern of unveiling and veiling. When the words "and they divided my vestments" was read from John 19, two deacons stripped the cloth that had previously been placed under the gospel-book on the altar.[108] The processional cross was then taken to the altar and laid on a cushion before being held aloft and unveiled. Finally, the cross was "buried" under linens as an "imitation of the burial of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ."[109]

In its representation of the Eucharist, the west side of the cross of the scriptures eschews the usual Old Testament typologies and hagiographies and instead emphasizes pathos, empathy, and compunction, presenting the viewer with the brutalized, humiliated, and broken body of Christ.[110] When the spectator stands before the cross, the Scourging of Christ is at eye level. Christ twists away from his torturers to stare mournfully out at the monument's audience as the blows fall upon his body. Because the figure of Christ is executed in three-quarter profile and high relief as well as at eye-level, his gaze rests upon anyone viewing the cross from the right, which is Christ's left, a perilous position in Christian iconography (Figs. 16-17). However, even those kneeling or standing directly beneath the cross must meet Christ's gaze. In the uppermost panel, Christ's body falls forward, hanging over the arms of his guards (Figs. 16-17). His head is carved in highest relief so that it projects into the viewer's space. Audiences look up at the collapsing Christ who gazes back from above, creating an intimate exchange of gazes. The corporal punishment of the sinners on the north side—and any penitential

supplicants standing beneath the cross of the scriptures—is dwarfed by the suffering Christ endures in order to rescue souls from the abyss.

Serpents, Bodies, and Souls: Transformations at Heaven's Gate

Discussing biblical symbolism, Augustine warned his audience that the relationship between signs and their meaning changes considerably depending on context. Illustrating his point, he explained that the Bible refers to the serpent as "that old serpent" but also advises, "Be you as wise as serpents."[111] Serpents appear with some frequency on the high crosses, featuring most prominently on the first monumental stone crosses on Iona. The many depictions of Adam and Eve that feature on the high crosses show the serpent pouring its venomous deceit into the ears of the first parents; however, Insular artists often juxtaposed serpents with the Crucifixion and/or Eucharist, prompted by a well-established typology. As noted by Bede, among the images Benedict Biscop brought from Rome for the English church was a representation of the brazen serpent paired with a depiction of the crucifixion. [112] The combination recalls John 3:14-15, "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so also must the Son of man be lifted up. So that whoever believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life." The gospel passage refers to Numbers 21:5-9 when God sent deadly, fiery serpents among the people who then admit their sin and repent. God subsequently instructed Moses, "Make a bronze serpent, and place it as a sign. Whoever, having been struck, gazes upon it, shall live."

The stave erected by Ciarán/Colman and Flann/Diarmait likely also refers to this episode. Although badly worn, the knob of the staff has eyes and an open mouth. It sprouts lappets or wings like many Insular serpents, and the sinuous lines that wind down the staff suggest a serpent's body (Figs. 2 and 3). Within the long and well-established association in Insular culture between the bronze serpent, the cross, and the sacraments, the depiction of the

foundation stake as a serpent/stave reminds the viewer that the church houses the salvific sacraments through which forgiveness and redemption might be obtained.

Large, fleshy serpents are carved on the northern and southern sides of the under-ring of the cross of the scriptures (Figs. 7, 12 and 14-15). Whereas the distinction between good and evil figures on the south and north sides of the shaft is readily apparent, the serpents are more ambiguous. Both sides show serpents winding around pairs of human heads, but there are subtle differences. The southern under-ring has two serpents, one moving upward and the other downward (Figs. 14-15). The northern under-ring shows a single snake, its body looping about itself so that the tail seems to disappear into its "ear" (Fig. 7). The image recalls the description of sinners in Psalm 57:7, "Their fury is similar to that of a serpent; it is like a deaf asp, who even blocks her ears." Appropriate to the cross's broader iconographic program, the psalm identifies the asp as sinners who will not heed correction, refusing to listen and change their ways.

Conversely, the two serpents on the other side might refer to the two kinds of serpents sent by God to Moses' people—the first, signifying the venomous serpents sent down to punish Moses' wayward people, and the second, the brazen serpent raised up to heal them after they repent. The visual juxtaposition with the Hand of God under the southern arm and the cat devouring/vomiting human bodies under the northern arm sharpens and amplifies the distinction between the serpents (Fig. 12). The carved human heads stare down and hover directly over the viewer's own head, serving as a warning and promise (Fig. 14). The similarity of the heads on either side of the under-arm suggests that anyone may fall.

Although rarely evident in published reproductions, anyone standing or kneeling in relative proximity to the cross would see its northern and southern under-ring when viewing either its west or east face. Consequently, when viewing the east side, the blessing Hand of

God is juxtaposed with the saved and the human-eating cat with the damned (Fig. 12). Alternatively, when viewing the west side of the cross, the Hand of God appears beneath Christ's left hand, and the cat under his right (Fig. 16). Because Longinus pierces Christ's left side on the cross of the scriptures, the pair of heads and two serpents are positioned directly under Longinus spear, reinforcing the message of the salvific powers of Christ's sacrifice.

When illustrating or discussing the high crosses, art historians tend to dwell upon the east and west faces. This habit is unsurprising as most high crosses contain little or no figurative imagery on their sides. At Clonmacnoise, the elevated plateau, the placement of the cross of the scriptures directly before the only entrance to the church, and the east-west orientation of the church would seem to reinforce this as the dominant and primary axis for viewing the cross (Figs. 1 and 20). Anyone entering or exiting the church, however, would have to walk past either the north or south side of the cross. While the east and west sides of the cross-head contrast the crucified Christ as a victim with the glorified Christ as Judge, the north and south sides point to similar, albeit lesser, transformations. The wayward sinner on the north side is corrected, punished, and shown the folly of earthly pleasures. After purification through repentance and Christ's sacrifice, humanity basks in the protection and benediction of the south side of the cross.

It seems likely that congregants would have passed by the cross's northern side with its emphasis upon sin and correction when entering the church and have left—cleansed, blessed, and filled with the Psalms—via the southern side. This transformation was a fundamental and emphatic characteristic of medieval Eucharist liturgy. The Stowe Missal compares the congregation's state at the beginning of the ritual to a "menstrual rag;" and yet, they are made worthy through Christ's sacrifice to become a tabernacle of God.[113] Similarly, after months and years of harsh penance and even exile from the body of Christ and monastic community, penitents were able to return on Maundy Thursday and rejoin the congregation in their worship

and participation in the sacrament.[114] Relevant to the depiction of the druid on the north side of the cross of scriptures, the change during Easter was not only inward. On Maundy Thursday, monks' hair was washed and tonsured.[115]

For centuries, church doorways have served as gathering points for congregations, entering and leaving the church. Detailed Anglo-Saxon and continental accounts of consecration ceremonies also describe crowds, including kings and priests, waiting outside while the bishop processed around the church, repeatedly knocking on the door with his crosier while reciting Psalm 23:7, "Lift up your gates, you princes, and be lifted up, eternal gates. And the King of Glory shall enter."[116] Similarly, the *Regularis concordia* describes how on Maundy Thursday, the brethren would gather at the front door, carrying a staff that terminated in a serpent's head. Striking a flint at the church door, they proceeded to light a candle fixed to the serpent's mouth before entering the church and relighting all of its lamps.[117]

As so emphatically signaled in church consecration ceremonies, the clergy controlled entrance and access to the church. In tenth-century Ireland, keys and locks would have primarily been associated with churches and outer gates.[118] In Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, when the key to a church is lost, at Columba's command the door's bolts unlock themselves.[119] At Clonmacnoise, the *Traditio Clavium* reminds the cross's audience that Christ's ministers hold the key to the Church and its sacraments and that these in turn are the keys that unlock heaven's door (Figs. 2 and 12). It recalls Matthew 16:18, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church . . . I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound, even in heaven. And whatever you release on earth shall be released, even in heaven." The reference to the "rock" chimes with the materiality of the site: Colman and Flann's erection of a stone church in place of a wooden original and stone crosses where wooden ones once stood.[120] The panel's position beneath the Last Judgement image

underlines Peter's authority as an extension of that of Christ who states in Revelation 1:17-18, "I am the first and last. I am alive though I was dead . . . And I hold the keys of death and hell."

From noon onwards, the sun illuminates the western side with its depiction of Christ's Passion and Entombment. The cross's shadow, which at noon takes the shape of a single line, arcs eastward, changing shape into a ringed cross pointing east in the late evening. Consequently, the shadow of the cross becomes the first and last thing, visible at sunrise and sunset (Figs. 4 and 20). Significantly elongated between October and March and at its greatest length near the winter solstice, the shadow reaches the church projecting onto its wall and, in the medieval period, its door (Fig. 20).[121] Consequently, on bright days during Advent, the cross "over-shadowed" the church, possibly recalling the incarnation. In Luke 1:35, Gabriel tells Mary, "The Holy Spirit will pass over you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow (*obumbrabit*) you. And because of this also, the Holy One who will be born of you shall be called the Son of God." Commentaries and Advent homilies explain that the intolerable brightness of Christ's divinity was mediated and overshadowed so that the human flesh of the Virgin could receive him to go forth into the world.[122] The conflation of the Church and the Virgin was well-established in Insular circles and is evident in numerous artworks including some that the Clonmacnoise sculptor might have been aware of, such as Book of Kells.[123] Additionally, the cross's shadow would likely recall the protection of God's shadow, so frequently cited in the Psalms and referenced in the images on the north side of the cross.

The shadow of the ringed cross, not that dissimilar in shape to a key, reaching toward the church door might also have recalled the frequent exegetical juxtaposition of cross and key. Augustine repeatedly described the cross as the key that frees souls "from the abyss of the earth".[124] Bede writes that the key signifies how Christ "conquered death by resurrection," breathing the Holy Spirit out upon God's Church and washing away their sins.[125] At Clonmacnoise, where the cross is inserted into a ground filled with bodies, the conception of

the cross as a key that frees the dead from the abyss has particular significance. It points to the final transformation, the resurrection of the body and union with Christ. On the west side of the cross, carved directly beneath the feet of the crucified Christ, is a bird (Figs 19 and 14b). It flies toward the ground with its wing outspread. Its downward orientation and unusual position are perplexing in an isolated landscape. When the cross is surrounded by crowds, however, it evokes images of Pentecost and the power of the Holy Spirit breathed out upon the priests and their congregation, promising that they, like Christ and through his sacrifice, will be freed from death.

Human audiences echoed, framed and completed the cross of the scriptures, contributing to the broader iconographic program. Praying in the *crucis vigilia* (Old Irish: *crossfigell*) pose, with arms outstretched in the form of a cross, was a widespread practice in Insular culture that was associated with penance and Lent.[126] Through penance, mortification of the body, and the sacraments, human bodies became like Christ and his cross. The iconographic program of the cross of the scriptures fully exploited the cross's structure as well as its position in both the built and natural environment. Its central message was one of transformation—from sin to salvation, pride to humility, dark to light, penitent to blessed, dead corpse to resurrected body.

This message would have undoubtedly had considerable appeal to penitents whether they were royalty, monks, or pilgrims. While emphasizing correction, punishment, and suffering, the cross simultaneously points to resurrection, benediction, and salvation. Tensions and movement between the two states are expressed around the compass points, but also vertically between the sky and earth; heaven and the abyss. Sinners are shown subjugated and pushed to the ground, but aid is sent down from the heavens. On the west side, the downward trajectory of the bird at Christ's feet directs the gaze to the ultimate lowering of Christ into the grave and to the corpses buried in the ground surrounding the cross. The downward slope of

Christ's strangely elongated arms and hands conveys the sense of the crucified Christ reaching down to elevate the faithful. The unusual manner in which the cross-arms slant upward creates a delicate and harmonious interaction. The cross strains up to God while Christ lowers himself in his humanity.

In his 1968 lecture series on Insular manuscripts, Meyer Schapiro drew attention to scribes' tendency to manipulate, integrate, and dissolve the boundaries between frame, field, and figure. As eloquently summarised by Herbert Broderick, "the frame is often part of the world it seeks to enclose, participating in the life of the field either through direct contact or shared vocabulary of color, rhythm and ornament."[127] While Schapiro's focus was largely formalist, Robert Deshman and Broderick demonstrated how such intersections conveyed meaning.[128] Examples range from the monstrous Blemmye in the *Marvels of the East* that threatens the manuscript's audience by escaping its own frame to the glorified Christ whose hands, feet, and head emerge from behind/beneath the frame of the John Portrait in the Book of Kells, appropriating the manuscript's margins.[129] In both, the figure and image violate the frame and collapse fields. Monstrous and divine hands occupy the same space as the reader's own hands, at the seams between viewer's world and that depicted within the frame, destabilizing boundaries between medium, audience, and image. Similarly, the semiotic field of the high crosses includes the syntactical relationship between the object, audience, and the living, dynamic world in which it is situated.

Commenting on the ideology of contemporary exhibitions in the 1980s, Brian O'Doherty concluded, "art exists in a kind of eternity of display. . . Indeed the presence of that odd piece of furniture, your own body, seems superfluous, and intrusion. The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not."[130] Tourists, photographers, and academics travelling to Clonmacnoise typically share the common goal of visiting on temperate days when the site is not "too busy;" however, high winds, rain, and

crowds serve as salient reminders that human beings and weather are not impediments to viewing the high crosses but rather an integral part of the cross's function and frame.

ABBREVIATIONS

CCCM Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediævalis

CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina

PRIA Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C

BNF Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

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[1] The "cross of the scriptures" is described as such (*Cros na Screaptra*) in the medieval annals, see note 18*. Somewhat confusingly, art historians and antiquarians use the term "scriptural crosses" to refer to the broader group of monumental crosses containing figurative imagery.

[2] Nonetheless, the recent production of a rotational, zoomable, three-dimensional model derived from digital scans of the cross of the scriptures by 3D-ICONS.ie has greatly facilitated this study, at http://www.3dicons.ie/3d-content/sites/52-cross-scriptures-clonmacnoise#3d-model. Additionally, I am most grateful for the assistance and patience of the Office of Public Works at Clonmacnoise.

[3] Outside of Ireland, only two academic monographs have been published in English: Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931) and Kees Veelenturf, *Dia Brátha: Eschatological Theophanies and Irish High Crosses* (Amsterdam: Stichting Amsterdamse Historische Reeks, 1997). A third monograph, Roger Stalley's *Early Irish Sculpture and the Art of the High Crosses* is forthcoming* with Yale University Press. Similarly, scholarly articles on the crosses are almost exclusively published in journals produced in Ireland or that focus on Irish topics. Recent and forthcoming American doctoral theses, several of which are discussed in this article, are a notable exception. In contrast, innumerable articles, monographs, and edited volumes focus on Anglo-Saxon sculpture.

[4] Heather Pulliam, "Tracing the Celts? Survival and Transformation, c. AD 800-1600," in *Celts: Art and Identity*, ed. Julia Farley and Fraser Hunter (London: British Museum, 2015), 206-33.

[5] Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 205 and Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Art* (Boulder: Westview, 2004), 93.

[6] Margaret Williams, *Icons of Irishness from the Middle Ages to the Modern World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and "'Celtic' Crosses and the Myth of Whiteness," in *Whose Middle Ages?*, ed. Andrew Albin et al. (New York: Fordham University, forthcoming* 2019). As noted by Williams and most recently explored in the British Museum's exhibition *Celts: Art and Identity*, the definition and suitability of the term "Celtic" has been and continues to be the subject of intense scrutiny and debate. For an overview of recent literature, see Williams, *Icons*, 10-12 and Farley and Hunter, *Celts*, esp. 24-31.

[7] Porter, *Crosses and Culture*, esp.18-20, 26-27, 44-45, and 128. For discussion of Porter's approach to Irish monuments and nationalist associations, see Carol Neuman de Vegvar, "In

the Shadow of the Sidhe: Arthur Kingsley Porter's Vision of an Exotic Ireland," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 17 (2001): 48–60. For the intersection of romanticism and photography in his work, see Kathryn Brush, "Medieval Art through the Camera Lens: The Photography of Arthur Kingsley Porter and Lucy Wallace Porter," *Visual Resources* 33 (2017): 252–94.

[8] Stokstad, *Medieval Art*, 93.

[9] Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: Habelt, 1992). Françoise Henry and Roger Stalley have also written extensively on the high crosses, for example, Françoise Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions* (London: London, 1967) and *The Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Three Candles, 1964); Roger Stalley, "European Art and the Irish High Crosses," *PRIA* 90C (1990): 135–58; Stalley, "Artistic Identity and the Irish Scripture Crosses," in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin: Four Courts, 2007), 153–66; Stalley, *Early Irish Sculpture*. It is worth noting that the Henry studied under and was mentored by the formalist Henri Focillon. The numerous short articles and booklets on the high crosses published by Helen M. Roe (1895-1988) are difficult to categorize, but her contribution to the field was considerable and should be acknowledged. Rory O'Farrell and Christine Bromwich, "Helen M. Roe (1895-1988): Champion of Medieval Irish Art and Iconography," in *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, ed. Jane Chance (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2005), 459–82.

[10] Harbison, *High Crosses*, 3.

[11] Ibid. The Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture is a multi-volume and ongoing project, see http://www.ascorpus.ac.uk/. A very limited number of color plates were introduced in volume 11, but the editors returned to exclusively black-and-white images in volume 12, the latest volume to be published. Paul Everson, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture. XII, Nottinghamshire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Ann Preston-Jones, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture. Volume XI, Early Cornish Sculpture* (Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2013). It should be noted that the approach to photography mirrors the catalog descriptions within the volumes, which aim to record, classify and describe—even following a strictly controlled "grammar" of ornament.

[12] Three notable exceptions are Margaret Williams, "The Sign of the Cross: Irish High Crosses as Cultural Emblems" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2000); Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, "Pilgrimage '*ad Limina Apostolorum'* in Rome: Irish Crosses and Early Christian Sarcophagi," in *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and Its European Context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9–26; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "High Crosses, the Sun's Course, and Local Theologies at Kells and Monasterboice," in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought in the Early Medieval Period*, ed. Colum Hourihane (University Park, PA, 2011), 149–74. My analysis is particularly indebted to Ó Carragáin's consideration of sunlight and shadow, as is a recent analysis of Iona's sculpture, Tasha Gefreh, "Place, Space and Time: Iona's Early Medieval High Crosses in the Natural and Liturgical Landscape" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2015). Scholarship on Anglo-Saxon monuments such as the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses is far more extensive, employing a wide-range range of methodologies that consider issues such as embodied viewing, ecology, object biography, agency, and performativity.

[13] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), 320.

[14] For examples of recent phenomenological approaches, see Bissera Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); David Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California, 2017); David Ganz and Stefan Neuner, ed., *Mobile Eyes: Peripatetisches Sehen in Den Bildkulturen Der Vormoderne*

(Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2013); Christopher Lakey, "Contingencies of Display: Benjamin, Photography, and Imagining the Medieval Past," *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* 7 (2016): 81–95; Rosalind Krauss, "Sense and Sensibility: Reflections of Post 60s Sculpture," *Artforum* 12 (1973): 42-53; Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); for an overview also Paul Crowther, *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[15] Andrew Patrizio, *The Ecological Eye: Assembling an Ecocritical Art History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 3.

[16] Caitlin Hutchinson at the University of Delaware is completing a doctoral thesis on the cross of the scriptures, which will be the first comprehensive study of the cross [forthcoming*]. While I have not read this work, personal communication suggests that it aims to contextualize the monument through surviving historical documents and geopolitical boundaries. Due to limited space this article does not include the iconography of the cross bases as the excessive erosion makes its interpretation especially challenging.

[17] Studies focusing on the monastery and scriptorium of Clonmacnoise include Heather A. King, *Clonmacnoise Studies*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Dúchas, the Heritage Service, 1998); Annette Kehnel, "S. Ciarán's Church and His Lands: A Study of the History and Development of Clonmacnoise," (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1995); Raghnall Ó Floinn, "Clonmacnoise: Art and Patronage in the Early Medieval Period," in *From the Isles of the North: Early Medieval Art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast: HMSO: 1995), 251–60; Conell Mageoghagan and Denis Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise: Being Annals of Ireland, from the Earliest Period to A.D. 1408* (Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1896). Additionally, Conleth Manning has published several short articles on Clonmacnoise.

[18] Kathryn Grabowski and David Dumville, *Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales: The Clonmacnoise-Group Texts* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984).

[19] On the west side, "OR DO FLAIND MC . . . [7]" continuing onto the east, "COLMAN DORROINDI IN CROSSA AR AN RÍ FLAIND." Françoise Henry and Roger Stalley have provided convincing grounds for retaining this reading of the inscription, refuting a radically alternative reading proposed by Peter Harbison. See P. Harbison, "The Inscriptions on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, County Offaly," *PRIA* 79 (1979): 177–188; Françoise Henry, "Around an Inscription: The Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 110 (1980): 36–46; Stalley, "Artistic Identity," 153.

[20] References to the event are included in the *Chronicum Scotorum;* the *Annals of the Four Masters* and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise.* William M. Hennessy, ed., *Chronicum Scotorum: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135* (London: Tanner Ritchie, 1866), 908; John O'Donovan, *Annála Rioghachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1851) 1:904 and 1:924; Murphy, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, 902. For discussion, see Kehnel, "S. Ciarán's Church," 88-90.

[21] Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture Ritual and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 63.

[22] The western wall would have been approximately two meters longer on its southern end. Manning, "Clonmacnoise Cathedral," in King, *Clonmacnoise Studies*, 57–86. For the position of the crosses, graves, and dating, see Heather King, "Clonmacnoise Excavation Report," 1994.196 and 1993:186, available at https://excavations.ie/; Conleth Manning, "The Earliest Plans of Clonmacnoise," *Archaeology Ireland* 8 (1994): 18–20 and "The Very Earliest Plan of Clonmacnoise," *Archaeology Ireland*, 12 (1998): 8–9.

[23] The figurative imagery of the south cross is limited to a depiction of the crucifixion on its west face. The surviving shaft of the North Cross is also largely ornamental, decorated with beasts and two entangled human figures, one of which is discussed below. For excavation reports, see note above; for dating, see Nancy Edwards, "An Early Group of Crosses from the Kingdom of Ossory," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 113 (1983): 5–46 and "Two Sculptural Fragments from Clonmacnois," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 114 (1984): 57–62

[24] Roger Stalley, "Irish Sculpture of the Early Tenth Century and the Work of the 'Muiredach Master': Problems of Identification and Meaning," *PRIA* 114 (2014):141–79. The tower cross at Kells is also known as the "cross of the SS Patrick and Columba." Harbison, *High Crosses*, Cat. No. 87, 89, 126, 127, 174, and 175.

[25] For a summary and ongoing debate, see Harbison, *High Crosses* 1:49 and Stalley, "Irish Sculpture," 157-62.

[26] Robert Macalister, *The Latin & Irish lives of Ciaran* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 91 and Whitley Stokes, *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 130. For arguments concerning dating of the Irish life, see Kehnel, "S. Ciarán's Church," 12-17.

[27] See, for example, Jennifer O'Reilly, "Patristic and Insular Traditions of the Evangelists: Exegesis and Iconography," in *Le Isole Britanniche e Roman in Eta Romanobarbarica*, ed. A.M. Luisellie Fadda and Éamonn Ó Carragáin (Rome: Hereder Editrice e Libreria, 1998), 49–94 and "Exegesis and the Book of Kells: The Lucan Genealogy," in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992*, ed. Felicity O'Mahony (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), 315–55; Michelle Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (London: British Library, 2003), 359.

[28] The Irish Life suggests these events occur in the morning, which might also explain the panel's position.

[29] George Warner, *The Stowe Missal* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1906) 1:38 and 1:41. On the cross of the scriptures, Christ's left side is pierced, but Irish crucifixions are far from consistent in this detail. Insular imagery anachronistically shows Longinus shown spearing Christ's side while Stephaton offers the sponge soaked in vinegar to Christ.

[30] Jeremiah 1:14-15, Ezekiel 38:6, Zephaniah 2:12, and Daniel 11:21-45.

[31] Ó Carragáin, "High Crosses," 153. For further discussion, see below.

[32] Ann Hamlin, "Crosses in Early Ireland: The Evidence of the Written Sources," in *Ireland and Insular Art A.D. 500-1200*, ed. Michael Ryan (Dublin, 1987), 138–40.

[33] See discussion below.

[34] William Hennessy, *Annals of Ulster* (Dublin: HMSO, 1887) 1:418-419.

[35] Harbison, *High Crosses*, 1:49; Stalley, "Irish Sculpture," 162-64; Margaret Williams, "Dressing the Part: Depictions of Noble Costume in Irish High Crosses," in *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress: Objects, Texts, Images*, ed. Desiree Koslin and Janet Snyder (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 45–66 at 52-53.

[36] Stalley, "Irish Sculpture," 162-64.

[37] O'Donovan, *Annála* 1:554-555; Williams, "Dressing the Part," 52-53.

[38] F. J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London: Batsford, 1973), 153. Although favoring Harbison's identification, Carol Neuman de Vegvar's broader discussion of horns in Insular culture, particularly their association with *amicitia* between ecclesiastical and secular communities, fits with the current interpretation of the cross of the scripture's iconographic program. Carol Neuman de Vegvar, "Markers of Prestige, Emblems of Amicitia: Attributes of Secular 'Portrait' Figures in Insular Sculpture," in *Listen, O Isles, unto Me: Studies in*

Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O'Reilly, ed. Elizabeth Mullins and Diarmuid Scully (Cork: Cork University Press, 2010), 219–29.

[39] Harbison, *High Crosses*, Cat. No. 126. The original position of the Kells market cross is uncertain, but the crucifixion almost certainly faced west. For discussion, see Veelenturf, *Dia Brátha*, 126-27 and Ó Carragáin, "High Crosses," 151 and 153-55.

[40] For a summary of the literature, see Harbison, *High Crosses* 1:54.

[41] Porter, *Crosses and Culture*, 30.

[42] Ibid., 9. The Sidhe are a fairy race from Celtic mythoglogy.

[43] Harbison, *High Crosses,* 1:53.

[44] George Henderson, "The Barberini Gospels (Rome, Vatican, 'Biblioteca Apostolica Barberini' Lat. 570) as a Paradigm of Insular Art," in *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art*, ed. Mark Redknap et al., 2001, 157–68 at 164. For the Barberini Gospels (Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican City, MS Barberini 570, fol. 1r), digitized manuscript at https://digi.vatlib.it/; for the Strathmartine cross fragment, see George Henderson and Isabel Henderson, *The Art of the Picts: Sculpture and Metalwork in Early Medieval Scotland* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), fig. 226.

[45] Trinity College Dublin, MS 58, fol. 255v, digitized manuscript at https://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/.

[46] Images and a rotational model made from digital scans of the north cross are available on line at http://www.3dicons.ie/3d-content/sites/44-north-cross-clonmacnoise#description.

[47] Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1996), 193-94. The Gundestrup Cauldron, Copenhagen, National Museum of Denmark, C6562-6576, digitized at https://en.natmus.dk/digital-collections/.

[48] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Bodley 579, fols. 49v-50r, digitized manuscript at https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/.

[49] For further examples of this kind of anti-type, see Ó Carragáin, "High Crosses," 162.

[50] Insular images referring to Psalm 90:13 often limit the four beasts to two creatures such as on the Ruthwell cross. Closer to the Clonmacnoise image, the Durham Cassiodorus (Durham Cathedral Library, B. II. 30, f. 172v) depicts David/Christ standing on a single serpent with a head on either end. See Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London: The British Library, 2005), 201-08 and J. J. G Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th Century* (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), fig. 75.

[51] Bibliothèque municipale, Amiens, MS 18, digitized manuscript available at https://gallica.bnf.fr/. Although a Carolingian Psalter, the Corbie Psalter exhibits numerous Insular characteristics and has a particularly close affiliation with the Book of Kells. Bernard Meehan, "The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter (with a Note on Harley 2788)," in *Studies in the Illustration of the Psalter*, ed. Brendan Cassidy and Rosemary Muir Wright (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), 12–23. On the symbolism of entanglement and riding, see Heather Pulliam "Exaltation and Humiliation: The Decorated Initials of the Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 18)," *Gesta* 49 (2010): 97–115 and *Word and Image in the Book of Kells* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), 144-56.

[52] Harbison, *High Crosses*, 1:53 and Porter, *Cross and Culture*, 29. Françoise Henry identified the image as the evangelist Matthew with his symbol, due to misreading the panel's southern counterpart as an image of John with his eagle above him. The southern panel, however, clearly depicts a winged anthropomorphic figure, not a bird. Henry, *Irish Art*, 173.

[53] Daniel McCarthy, "On the Shape of Insular Tonsure," *Celtica* 24 (2003): 140–67.

[54] Whitley Stokes, *Lives*, 124-25 and 270.

[55] Ibid., 276 and 130

[56] Stokes, *Tripartite Life,* 103-105.

[57] See, for example, Bede's discussion of Ceolfrid's letter to Nechtan and a quote attributed to Gildas in the Irish Canons. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.21, Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 548-51; Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 317. For further sources and discussion see, Maud Joynt, "Airbacc Giunnae," *Ériu* 10 (1926): 130–34 and McCarthy, "On the Shape," 140–67.

[58] G. Constable, "Beards in History," in *Apologiae duae*, *CCCM* 63, ed. R. Huygens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 47-150 at 63.

[59] The similarities between manuscript and high cross noted above do not necessarily indicate a direct connection between the manuscript and cross, but rather a common visual vocabulary. For a discussion of the essential role played by the soul-friend, see J. Ryan, *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early development* (Dublin: Talbot, 1931), 355.

[60] Hamlin, "Crosses."

[61] Examples include the beasts under Christ's feet in the Ruthwell cross that form a "Chi" with their forelegs; Christ's body stretched out into a "Chi" shape on folio 114r of the Book of Kells; Luke's crossed staves in the St. Chad Gospels, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 218, digitised manuscript at https://lichfield.ou.edu/. For the Ruthwell cross, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual*, 201-05. For the Book of Kells, see note 45* and for discussion of the significance of the "Chi" in Insular art and culture as well as further examples, see Suzanne Lewis, "Sacred Calligraphy: The Chi Rho Page in the Book of Kells," *Traditio* 36 (1980): 139–59; Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Book of Kells: Folio 114r: A Mystery Revealed and yet Concealed," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Medieval Britain and Ireland*, ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museum of Scotland, 1993), 106–14.

[62] Harbison hesitantly identifies it as a mouse, however, the two legs appear to be human. Harbison, *High Crosses* 1:53.

[63] See Martin Kirigin, *La mano divina nell'iconografia cristiana* (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1976); Karl Gross and Wolfgang Speyer, *Menschenhand und Gotteshand in Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart : A. Hiersemann, 1985).

[64] Sacramentary of Charles the Bald (BNF MS lat. 1141) fol. 2v, c.869-70. Digitized manuscript available at https://gallica.bnf.fr/. Ciaran Ó Sabhaois, Chris Lynn, and Liz Fitzpatrick, "The Crowning Hand of God," *Archaeology Ireland* 11 (1997): 21–23. The suggestion that the manner in which the Hand overlaps the circular band should be read as a "grasping action" that was "beyond his [the sculptor's] artistic competence" is unreasonable given the sophistication and deftness with which the Clonmacnoise sculptor renders bodies, limbs, and hands in various complex positions throughout the rest of the cross. Additionally, the open Hand of God in the Uta Codex (c.1025), discussed below, overlaps the circle surrounding it in a similar fashion.

[65] BNF MS lat. 1, fol. 423r and BNF MS lat.1152, fol. 3v, digitized manuscripts available at https://gallica.bnf.fr/; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, MS Clm. 14000, fols. 5v and 97v, digitized manuscript at https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/.

[66] I am grateful to the *Art Bulletin's* anonymous reader for raising this point.

[67] William J. Diebold, "Verbal, Visual, and Cultural Literacy in Medieval Art: Word and Image in the Psalter of Charles the Bald," *Word & Image* 8 (1992): 89–99 at 96.

[68] Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, CM.299-1993. M. Blackburn, "Two New Halfpennies of Edward the Elder and Athelstan'," *British Numismatic Journal* 63 (1993): 123–24.

[69] Gerard Murphy, "*Scotti Peregrini*: The Irish on the Continent in the Time of Charles the Bald," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 17 (1928): 39–50 at 41.

[70] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland: 400-1200* (London: Longman, 1995), 263.

[71] Adam S. Cohen, *The Uta Codex: Art, Philosophy, and Reform in Eleventh-Century Germany* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 28.

[72] Ildar H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c. 751-877)* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 246.

[73] For both poem and translation, see William Diebold, "The Artistic Patronage of Charles the Bald" (PhD diss., John Hopkins University, 1990), 112.

[74] See discussion below.

[75] Ó Floinn, "Clonmacnoise."

[76] C. Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae,* 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 1:163-34.

[77] Eamonn Ó Carragáin discusses this phenomenon in relation to depictions of Christ in the Tomb at Kells, Durrow and Monasterboice. Ó Carragáin, "Recapulating History: Contexts for the Mysterious Moment of Resurrection on Irish High Crosses" in *Making Histories*, ed. Jane Hawkes (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2013), 246-61 at 247-48.

[78] Riccardo Pizzinato, "Exitus et Reditus: The 'Codex Aureus' of Saint Emmeram as Pictorial Exegesis" (PhD diss., University of John Hopkins in Baltimore, 2012), 137-44. Although not referring to the Hand of God, Bianco Kühnel has pointed to the close and detailed visual similarity between Isidore's diagram and the shape created by the intersection of the ring and four curved arms of the cross of the scriptures. Bianca Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art / Bianca Kühnel.* (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2003), 139-140.

[79] For the possible effects of rain on certain Scottish and Anglo-Saxon monuments, see Heather Pulliam, "Blood, Water and Stone: The Performative Cross" in *Making Histories*, 262-278.

[80] For shelter in the cover or shadow of God's wings, see Psalms 16:8, 35:8, 56:2, 60:5, 62:8, and Ps 90:4. For the Hand of God, see Psalms 17:36, 19:7, 43:3, 59:7, 62:9, 79:18, 88:22,

97:1, 103:28, 107:7, 108:27, 109:1, 117:16, 118:73, 135:12, 137:7, 138:5, 135:10, and 143:7. Also, Psalm 120 speaks of God protecting the faithful from the sun, "The Lord is your keeper, the Lord is your protection, above your right hand. The sun will not burn you, nor the moon by night." Extreme devotion to the psalms was a feature of Insular monasticism, with many monks reciting fifty psalms or the entire psalter each day. Additionally, the corpus of high crosses frequently draws upon the psalms. See M. McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 353-77 and Catherine Herbert, "Psalms in Stone: Royalty and Spirituality on Irish High Crosses" (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 1997).

[81] Harbison suggests these two figures may be the allegorical figures of the Sun and Moon holding torches, or Earth with a cornucopia and Ocean with his water jar. Both pairs are frequently found in contemporary continental representations of the crucifixion. Harbison, *High Crosses*, 1:52

[82] Most likely Christ was originally shown clad in tight, short pants similar to those that survive on Muiredach's cross.

[83] Ibid., 1:53.

[84] See note 2*.

[85] Ian Hughes, ed., *Stair Nicoméid: The Irish Gospel of Nicodemus* (London: The Irish Texts Society, 1991).

[86] Atkinson, *Leabhar Breac*, 133 and 381. For a discussion of dating and related texts, see Juliet Mullins, "Preaching the Passion: *Imitatio Christi* and the Passions and Homilies of the Leabhar Breac," in *Envisioning Christ on the Cross: Ireland and the Early Medieval West*, ed. Juliet Mullins, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, and Richard Hawtree (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), 195–213.

[87] For example, Margaret Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1887), 19 and Porter, *Crosses and Culture*, 52.

[88] Henry, *Irish Art*, 159; Harbison, *High Crosses*, 1:51.

[89] See Harbison, *High Crosses*: 1:81.

[90] Ibid., 1:51

[91] Thomas O'Loughlin, citing Adomnán's description of Adam's grave, suggests the emphasis on Adam's hope of resurrection is a particularly Insular contribution to the association between the cross of Christ and Adam's grave. Thomas O'Loughlin, "Adam's Burial at Hebron: Some Aspects of Its Significance in the Latin Tradition," *PRIA* 15 (1992): 66–88 at 77. Irish glosses on Ephesians 5:14 similarly connect cross, grave and Adam's resurrection. John de Paor, "Adam's Grave, Adam's Soul and Our Souls, the Doctrine of the Three Letters and Clm 6235," in *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland: Proceedings of the 1993 Conference of the Society for Hiberno-Latin Studies on Early Irish Exegesis and Homiletics* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 95–108 at 96.

[92] O'Loughlin, "Adam's Burial," 78. For burial at Clonmacnoise, see discussion below.

[93] The physical proximity and visibility of the graves, church, cross, and worshippers as well as the visual familiarity of the burial apparatus portrayed in the panel, create an intimate sense of the community of Clonmacnoise, uniting the living and the dead in Christ. Williams, "Sign of the Cross," 134-44.

[94] Bibliothèque Municipale, Angers MS 24, dated to the late ninth or early tenth century is often cited as the first representation of the deposition. Beatrice Kitzinger, "The Liturgical Cross and the Space of the Passion: The Diptych of Angers MS 24142," in *Envisioning Christ*,141-159.

[95] Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht MS 32, fol. 8r, and British Library, London, Harley MS 603, folio 8r. Digitized manuscripts at http://psalter.library.uu.nl/ and http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/.

[96] The Durrow cross, market cross at Kells, tall cross at Monasterboice and the cross of the scriptures. See note 24*.

[97] Victoria and Albert Museum, London, No. 253-1867, digital image at http://collections.vam.ac.uk/. Henry *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions*, 183-84 and A.M. Luiselli Fadda, "The Mysterious Moment of Resurrection in Early Anglo-Saxon and Irish Iconography," in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. A. J Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 149–68.

[98] Harbison, *High Crosses*, 1:334-35, 1:252, 1:256, 1:299 and 1:304. Neil O'Donoghue, *The Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 194.

[99] The inclusion and expansion of the Old Irish tract in the fifteenth-century Leabhar Breac suggest that its use was relatively widespread and long-lived. O'Donoghue, *Eucharist*, 71,

[100] Warner, *Stowe Missal*, 2:3.

[101] O'Donoghue, *Eucharist*, 204-05 and 210-11.

[102] Ibid., 216.

[103] With twenty pieces of bread forming the "the circuit-wheel." Ibid., 213-14. It has been suggested that the bosses on the paten served as a guide for the intricate arrangement of the host as described in the Old Irish Mass Tract. Michelle Brown, "Paten and Purpose: The Derrynaflan Paten Inscriptions," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), 162–67 at 165.

[104] Raghnall O'Floinn and Patrick F. Wallace, *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland: Irish Antiquities* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2002), cat. no. 5:30.

[105] Muiredach's cross reproduced in Harbison, *High Crosses*, fig. 894; Athlone Plaque reproduced in O'Floinn and Wallace, *Treasures*, Cat. 5:33; St. Gall Gospels, Stiftsbibliothek, St. Gall, Codex 51, p. 266, digitized manuscript at https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en.

[106] Warner, *Stowe Missal*, 13.

[107] Warren, *Stowe Missal*, 7 and 9. The use of a double veil is also suggested in the *Penitential of Cummian*, Archdale King, *Liturgies of the Past* (London: Longman, Green, 1959), 254.

[108] Liturgy and commentaries of later centuries associate the stripping and scourging of Christ with the Easter ritual and draw further connections to the beating and disrobing of the Bride in the Song of Songs. In such cases, Christ, the Bride, and Church undergo mortification to ready themselves for union. Susan L. Smith, "The Bride Stripped Bare: A Rare Type of the Disrobing of Christ," *Gesta* 34 (1995): 126–146.

[109] Thomas Symons, ed., *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation* (London; Nelson, 1953), 41-46.

[110] For *compunctio* as a predominant theme in Insular manuscripts, see Nick Baker, "The Evangelists in Insular Culture, c.600-800 AD" (PhD diss., University of York 2011).

[111] Augustine, *Sermones ad populum* 73.2, *CCSL* 41A: 356.

[112] Bede, *Historiam abbatum* 9, Charles Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 373. For a discussion of the Adam and Eve iconography on the high crosses, see Harbison, *High Crosses*, 1:189-94. For the frequent juxtaposition of the crucifixion, Eucharist and serpent, see Isabel Henderson, "The Book of Kells and the Snake-Boss Motif on Pictish Cross-Slabs and the Iona Crosses," in *Ireland and Insular Art*, 56–65.

[113] Referencing Isaiah 64.6, Warner *Stowe Missal*, 3 and in a fragment preserved at St. Gall, see John Ryan, "The Mass in the Early Irish Church," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 50 (1961): 371–84 at 377.

[114] The Second Synod of Patrick dictated that all penitents must receive the Eucharist at Easter, O'Donoghue, *Eucharist*, 93.

[115] King, *Liturgies*, 224.

[116] Brian Repsher, *The Rite of Church Dedication in the Early Medieval Era* (Lewiston, New York: Mellon Press, 1998), 47-100.

[117] Symons, *Monastic Agreement*, 38-39.

[118] Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 97.

[119] Ibid. *Vita Columbae* 2.36, Anderson, A.O. and M.O. Anderson, eds., *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 146-9.

[120] King, "Clonmacnoise Excavation Report," 1994.196.

[121] The effect of a ringed-cross's shadow on a wall seems to have also been exploited in eighth-century Iona, where "St. John's cross" was situated directly in front of St. Columba's shrine. Due to its closer proximity, the shadow occurs throughout the year. See Gefreh, "Place," 260-61.

[122] Bede, *In Lucam* 1:31-35, *CCSL* 120: 33-35 and Bede, *Homeliarum evangelii* 1,3 *CCSL* 122:18. Robert Deshman delineates this association between the incarnation, clouds, and shadow in the writings of Ambrose, Jerome, Isidore of Seville and Hrabanus Maurus. Robert Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995), 10-13.

[123] Carol Farr, "*Bis per Chorum Hinc et Inde*: The 'Virgin and Child with Angels' in the Book of Kells," in *Text, Image, Interpretation,* 117–34.

[124] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps.45.1 and 70.2.9, *CCSL* 38: 517 and *CCSL* 39: 967-68.

[125] Bede, *Explanatio Apocalypsis* 1.1, *CCSL* 121A: 249.

[126] Carol A Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience* (London: British Library, 1997), 106-08.

[127] Meyer Schapiro, *The Language of Forms: Lectures on Insular Manuscript Art* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 2005); Herbert R. Broderick, "Some Attitudes toward the Frame in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Artibus et Historiae* 3 (1982): 31–42.

[128] Robert Deshman, "Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images," *Art Bulletin* 79 (1997): 518–46.

[129] Folio 292v of the Book of Kells, see note 45*.

[130] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica: Lapis Press, 1986), 15.